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Book Review: Philosophy of Science: Key Concepts

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CHOICE *connect*

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French, Steven. **Philosophy of science: key concepts**. 2nd ed. Bloomsbury Academic, 2016. 227p bibl index ISBN 9781474245241, $86.00; ISBN 9781474245234 pbk, $24.95; ISBN 9781474245258 ebook, contact publisher for price.

In this clearly written, well-organized revision of his *Science: Key Concepts in Philosophy* (2007), French (philosophy of science, Univ. of Leeds, UK) provides a discussion that is cutting edge in terms of breaking discoveries. He synthesizes knowledge of entire scientific disciplines—physics, astronomy, genetics, biology, math, medicine, chemistry, paleontology, primatology, psychology, and so on—into a coherent, astute account of the whole, presenting the major philosophical concepts of "how science works." He looks at, among much else, how scientific theories are discovered; how they explain phenomena and reality; why, as Alfred North Whitehead said, one cannot know something unless one can measure it; what roles social and political factors play in scientific practice; whether science can ever be purely independent of its social context; the relation between truth, scientific theories, and scientific confirmation; how scientists come to grips with the uncertainty illustrated by the history of changing scientific theories; how social factors in general influence the objectivity of science; and how gender bias impacts science. The best introduction to date to the philosophy of science, the volume includes excellent suggested readings.

--D. B. Levy, Touro College, Lander College for Women

Summing Up: Essential. All readers.